

Freedy Johnston alternates between rockers and acoustic tunes on his album *The Trouble Tree* (Bar None), but will be strictly acoustic when he plays at Old City Coffee. Not even a sound system. Johnston has a high reedy voice sort of similar to Loudon Wainwright III and writes catchy songs which he puts over with convincing, sometimes manic intensity. Among the highlights are the opening rocker "Innocent," the jazz flavored "No Violins," and "Little Red Haired Girl." Lyrically, he's out of the ordinary, yet down to earth, while his melodies take strange twists and turns on songs like "That's What You Got," and "Fun Ride," a great song about escaping for a day that anyone should be able to relate to. And by the way, the coffee is great.

Freedy Johnston with Adam Miller, Falling Ushers and Rob Boyer: Fri., Jan. 3 at 7:30 p.m. at Old City Coffee, 221 Church St., \$5, 629-9292.

--Peter Brown